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Notes on Spanish amulets

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From Folk-Lore, Dec. 1906.

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Notes on Spanish Amulets.[1]

BY W. L. HILDBURGH.

During a trip through Spain, in 1905, I made numerous inquiries concerning amulets, the results of which are embodied in the following notes. These enquiries were made entirely in towns of more or less importance, mostly upon objects in actual use or exposed for sale, and were addressed to persons of the lower and the middle classes. The scope of my paper is therefore somewhat limited, because in Spain, as in other countries, the beliefs in connection with amulets persist longer in the villages and smaller towns than in the cities.

At the present time, in the cities at least, the employment of the ancient amulets seems to be rapidly disappearing, their places being taken, to a certain extent, by the religious medals which formerly were worn simultaneously with them. Very few of the amulets noted appear still to be made, though some of the less rare ones may be found in use in a worn condition. Thus it was difficult, and sometimes impossible, to ascertain and to verify the nature of the use of an amulet, for which reason these notes must be taken as indicative rather than definitive. From various statements made it appears that of late years a considerable interest has been taken in the gathering of Spanish amulets, and that there are several collections of them in Spain, but I have not verified these statements, nor have I examined any of the collections reputed to exist.

[1] Forming the basis of a paper read before the Folk-Lore Society, April 25, 1906.

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There are very great resemblances between the secular amulets of Spain and of Italy, even more, perhaps, than might be expected to have resulted from the Roman colonisation of the country, and its subsequent close relations with Italy. From these resemblances we may draw conclusions as to the purposes of certain objects identical with objects still, or until recently, used in Italy, but the manner of whose former employment in Spain was not readily ascertainable. It is unfortunate that the fragmentary nature of the material available has made a fuller comparison of the amulets of the two countries impracticable. Besides the amulets showing the results of Roman and Italian influences there are others wherein the effects of the Moorish occupation may be traced, others which may be assumed to be of prehistoric origin, if not of prehistoric introduction, and finally those which are at present in process of infiltration from other countries.

It would be easy to give European or Oriental parallels, and in some instances many of them, to almost every amulet referred to, for a number of the Spanish amulets are outcrops of very widespread superstitions, but I have limited my comparisons almost exclusively to some of the parallel amulets of Italy, a co-heir with Spain of the ancient Roman influences which so largely predominate in the beliefs of the Spanish people.

A belief in the evil, envious, or jealous eye and its effects is still prevalent in Spain, but to a stranger the Spaniards will generally say very little regarding it or an amulet against it, unless some knowledge of the subject is shown by their questioner. Amongst people of the middle classes there appears to be some shame in acknowledging the belief to a stranger, and there seems to be a common opinion that it is unknown to, or not shared by, the residents of more northerly lands.

Horns. But few of the ancient amulets against the evil eye are still in use, at least openly, in the cities; of those that remain the most noticeable are in the form, or of the nature of horns. (Fig. 1, Pl. IV.)[1] A piece of deer's horn, with an iron loop for

[1] Throughout the descriptions the Arabic numerals are used to denote the figures of the objects, and the Roman numerals the plates on which they are shown.

suspension, hung by a cord beneath the neck of a donkey or mule; from Granada. In most cities this amulet is to be seen upon comparatively few animals, and seemingly only upon those of peasants from the surrounding country; it generally shows signs of long-continued wear. It is usually carried by only one or two of the donkeys of a party, and most often by the leading one. In several instances, where an attempt to purchase the amulet was made, a considerable disinclination to remove it from the animal was shown, despite the offer of more than the acknowledged cost of a new protective.

(2, IV.) A new piece of deer's horn, perforated for suspension; from Madrid. This and a few similar specimens at the same booth were the only donkeys' amulets seen at Madrid during a stay of two weeks. It was obtained from a small dealer in the market for old harness, and was probably kept for sale to a peasant.

(3, IV.) A large and handsome piece of rough-surfaced antler, mounted in silver; Toledo. A type of an amulet said formerly to be worn by children of the better classes, but now apparently no longer used.

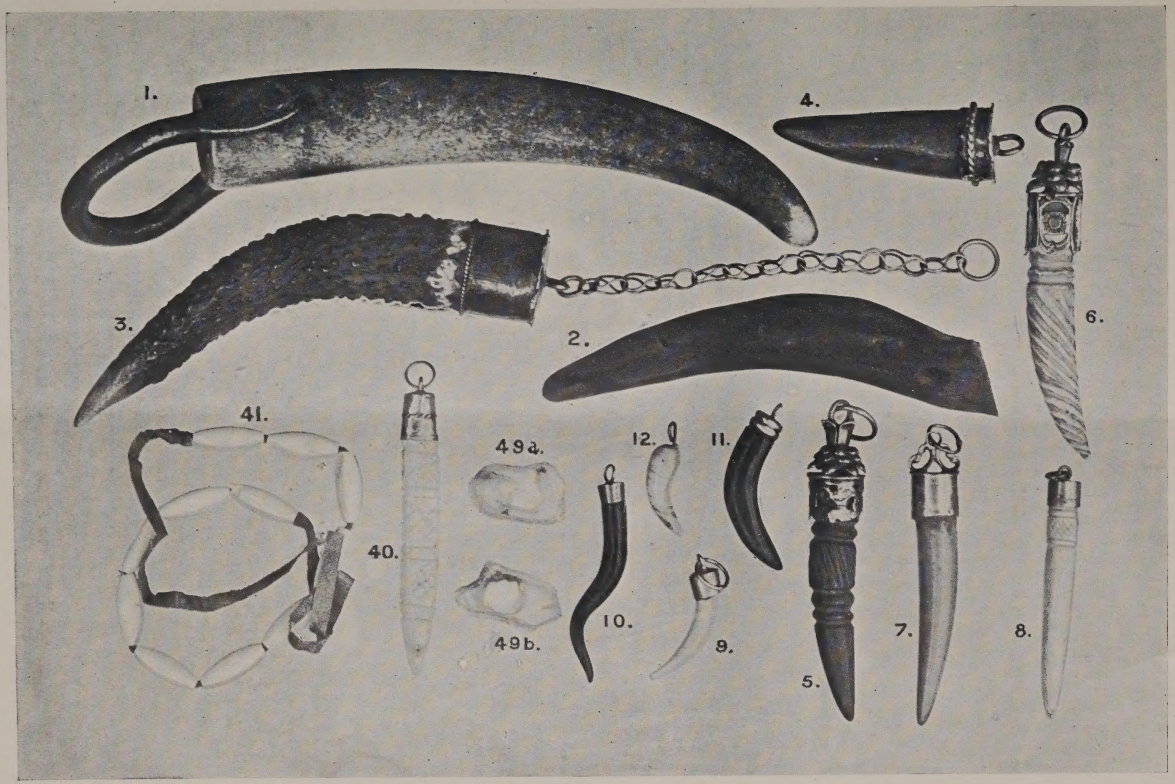
(4, IV.) A bit of antler, mounted in silver; Granada.

(5, IV.) A decorated bit of antler, mounted in silver; Seville.

(6, 7, 8, 9, IV.) Horn-shaped pieces of bone, of typical shapes, mounted in silver; Seville. Similar pendants are to be found in many of the silversmiths' shops in the poorer quarters of Seville, Granada, and other cities. These pieces of bone are worn by children, not against the effect of the evil eye only, but as an aid in teething as well, for which latter purpose the substance bone is considered to be particularly efficacious (compare AMULETS FOR INFANTS). Borrow[1] says that it is supposed, in Andalusia, that if an evil glance fall upon the child wearing it the little horn takes the evil upon itself and breaks. No definite confirmation of the present existence of this belief was obtained. Nos. 5 and 6 are particularly interesting as showing elaborate ornamentation applied to simple amuletic pendants.

(10, IV.) A horn-shaped piece of translucent horn or tortoise-shell, mounted in silver; Seville.

[1] Borrow, *Zincali*, vol. i. chap. 9.



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(11, IV.) A horn-shaped piece of coral, mounted in silver; Seville.

(12, IV.) A horn-shaped piece of twisted glass, white and yellow, similar to pendants worn in other continental countries, and probably an importation; Gipsy Settlement, Granada (compare Gipsy Amulets).

Lunar Crescents, Boars' Tusks, Crustaceans' Claws.

In some of their protective aspects, these are closely related to horns, but, though formerly much employed against jealousy and the evil eye, they appear now to be obsolete in the Spanish cities; all of them are, however, contemporary Italian amulets. The lunar crescent occurs variously in the ancient amulets, but by no means so commonly as in contemporary Portuguese charms. That the boar's tusk has been employed until quite recently is evidenced by its fairly frequent occurrence in a used condition, whilst its almost complete absence from the stocks of silversmiths seem to indicate a decay of the belief in its efficacy.

(13, VII.) A human-faced crescent, of brass, with a projection for a strap to pass through; Granada. Said to be a horse's ornament formerly in use, but now no longer employed. Diligent inquiry amongst the numerous dealers in old harness at Madrid failed to bring any specimens of it to light. It is practically identical with a horse's amulet at present used in Naples.[1] A similar crescent was seen at Seville, and another at Madrid; another, of copper, and differing slightly from the brass ones just described was noted at Madrid.

(14, VII.) A brass crescent with strongly marked horns, enclosing a sun (or, possibly, a star); Seville. Probably a horse's amulet.

(15, VII.) A thin silver crescent, having a "fig" hand (compare Hands) between the horns, and a four-petalled flowerlike emblem within its body; Seville. The significance of this emblem was not determined, but it has possibly some connection with the hand, having, in some instances, been found on the wrists of the "fig" hands in certain Portuguese compound amulets. It may possibly represent a rue-flower, or may be derived from the

[1] Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, Lond., 1895, p. 209.

same source as a modern Moorish decorative symbol, much like it, representing the protective number *five*.[1] A similar symbol, between the horns of a crescent, is a favourite decoration of Algerian amulet pouches; to some Algerians its meaning was unknown; to others it represented a star. An almost identical crescent was obtained at Toledo.

(16, VII.) A boar's tusk, mounted with chains as a pendant; Seville. This amulet was said to have been worn by a woman to secure abundance of milk during nursing; no confirmation, or other instance of this belief was obtained.

(17, VII.) A boar's tusk, mounted in metal; Madrid. A usual type.

(18, VII.) A boar's tusk, mounted in silver, with small bells; Granada. An amulet for children.

(19, VII.) A crustacean's claw, mounted in silver; Granada.

HANDS. Hands occur in two forms in Spanish amulets; hands making the "fig" gesture, and open hands. The former, in the shape of a closed fist whose thumb protrudes between the index and middle fingers, is the *mano fica* of the Italians, and is identical in form with the ancient Roman and Phœnician, and probably prehistoric, charms against the evil eye. This hand, which the Romans left wherever they founded colonies, was until recently a favourite Spanish amulet, but although it is still extensively employed in Portugal, it has, judging from the cheap ornaments and trinkets for sale on street stands, in the markets, and at the silversmiths' shops, almost or entirely lost its former vogue in Spain. Despite the fact that the only hands of this type met with, having the simple form, were of coral or of glass, it may reasonably be assumed that anciently numbers of such made of bone, of cow's horn, or of some similarly cheap material were used, just as in Portugal to-day, and that these, being neither beautiful nor curious, have disappeared.[2]

[1] Westermarck, "The Magic Origin of Moorish Designs," *Journ. Anth. Inst.*, vol. xxxiv., 1904.

[2] Mr. C. J. Tabor has called my attention to the fact that these hands are, or were until quite recently, worn at the neck, or at the wrist, or

In Spain the primitive and customary form of the "fig" hand developed in an extraordinary, and probably unique, manner, the cause of which may possibly be found in the reinforcement of the ancient belief by the Moorish faith in the protective virtues of a simple image of the hand. Not only was the original object magnified, and strengthened by the addition of several smaller and similar hands, but various other supposedly protective symbols were combined with it, and the whole design was executed in some material, generally jet, in itself deemed preservative against fascination. Two very elaborate amulets of this kind are referred to by Cuming;[1] one, of jet, has a crescent moon upon the palm, two little hands upon the sides of the wrist, and a figure with a child upon the frill at the end of the wrist; the other, also with a crescent moon upon the palm, has upon the wrist a construction upheld by four small hands, and terminating in a knob. They are said to be Spanish, dating probably from about the end of the sixteenth century, and to be charms against the evil eye. Compare JET.

The figure of an open hand, which is still used by the Mohammedan nations as a protection against the evil eye, is to be found on various Moorish structures in Spain, and notably on one of the principal gates of the Alhambra. A curious coincidence in connection with this figure, which, as an amulet, has probably long been neglected in Spain, is that it is being re-introduced in the shape of a metal "charm" of foreign, but European, manufacture, copied in miniature from a common North African form, and probably intended principally for sale in North Africa, sold in the streets of Madrid (as elsewhere on the continent) as a bringer of good fortune.

(20, V.) A glass "fig" hand, probably of Spanish manufacture, white, overlaid with streaks and spots of red, green, blue, and yellow; Madrid. Slightly broken. The bright colours,

both, by Spanish bull-fighters. Such men, being exposed at critical moments to the thousands of envious glances, and perhaps to some of naturally "evil" eyes, are likely to retain longer a belief in the necessity of these amulets than, probably, any other class of the population.

[1] Cuming, "On the Hand Amulet," *Jour. Arch. Assn.*, Lond., 1866, p. 291; as taken from Douce's *Illustrations of Shakespeare.*

irregularly disposed, were probably intended to avert fascination in the same manner as the bunches of multicoloured ribbons still worn in Italy and elsewhere for the protection of men and animals.

(21, V.) A "fig" hand of twisted clear, white, red, and blue glasses; Granada. The same observations apply as to No. 20.

(22, V.) A "fig" hand of red coral; Seville. A fairly common type.

(23, V.) A "fig" hand of jet, mounted in silver; Madrid. Above the palm, in heavy openwork, are a heart, a lunar crescent (?), and scrollwork.

(24, V.) A "fig" hand of jet, in an apparently new silver mounting; Madrid. At the top of the wrist are four smaller "fig" hands terminating in the silver mounting, and within the curve of the index finger of the main hand is a human-faced lunar crescent. A similar hand, lacking the four supporting hands, and of rude workmanship, was obtained at Granada.

(25, V.) An unused pair of flat open hands, of white metal, with a six-pointed "Seal of Solomon," a crescent, and the Arabic word *mabrūk* (= blessed), on the back of each (see general remarks on Hands); Madrid.

Coral. Coral as a substance, and independently of its conformation, is thought to be protective against the evil eye. At Madrid, in the windows of jewellers' shops in the better quarters, trays containing small pendants, mostly of purely ornamental shapes, and usually worn several together, of red, pink, or pink-and-white coral, are shown with the legend "*La Buena Sombra*," "The Good Shadow." Old single pendants of red coral, having the form of the *mano fica*, a "horn," or a branch at times rudely carved, are not infrequently to be met with. No mention of any virtue other than that of combatting the effect of the evil eye was made with respect to these.

(26, V.) A pendant of rough, slightly carved, red coral, mounted in silver; Seville. Compare Nos. 11 and 22.

Jet. Jet also was supposed to possess similar preservative qualities, and it was the favourite material for the construction

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of the complex hand-amulets (compare Nos. 23 and 24). At Seville an ovoid pendant of jet having a cross rudely cut upon it, was noted, and at Madrid several small religious images of the same substance. A Spanish physician, Gutierrez, writing on fascination in the middle of the seventeenth century, says that infants wore a "fica" of jet, at the neck, against the evil eye, and that there was a belief that this would split, taking all the injury upon itself, if the wearer were exposed to the evil influence.[1] The "Antipathes" ("counteracting stone") mentioned by Pliny,[2] a black non-translucent stone which magicians recommended as protective against witchcraft, may have been jet.

Bells. Small bells are in common use, frequently in conjunction with other amuletic objects. Practically every horse, mule, or donkey in Spain wears a bell, however tiny and feeble it may be, not necessarily, perhaps, as an acknowledged protection, but certainly as a concession to some once universal custom. To many children's amulets, also, there are little bells attached. It is fair to assume that the sound of these bells, as amongst the ancient Romans and the modern Italians, was formerly intended to keep the wearer from witchcraft and fascination. Compare Nos. 18 and 28 (VI.); and 39 (VII.).

Badgers. (27, V.) A paw, mounted in silver, said to be that of a badger, brought into Spain from abroad, and formerly considered efficacious against the evil eye; Granada. A similar paw, in much the same condition, was obtained at Toledo; another was noted at Madrid.

The strap around the neck of a horse, to which the bells are attached, is often lined with badger-skin, the hairs of which form a narrow fringe around the edge of the leather. The use of this skin may be to keep the strap from galling the animal, but it is much more likely to be either amuletic or the survival of an amuletic custom. No statements as to

[1] J. L. Gutierrez, *Opusculum de Fascino*, Lugduni, 1653, p. 38.

[2] Pliny, *Natural History*, xxxvii. 54. He speaks elsewhere (xxxvi. 34) of a variety of jet under the names of "Gagates."

the virtue of the skin were secured. In Italy the paws and the hair of the badger are still much used as amulets against the evil eye and witches, the hair being a favourite with those having the charge of horses.[1]

SIRENS. (28, VI.) A silver ornament and whistle, for a child, in the form of a fish-tailed woman holding a comb in one hand and a mirror in the other, to which a number of small bells are attached; Saragossa. A similar siren was noted at Seville.

The "*sirena*" must formerly have been quite commonly worn by children of the upper classes, and it is sometimes to be seen represented in old portraits. Although I have seen only two specimens in Spain itself, two others were met with in different parts of the Netherlands; there is one at South Kensington, and there are three exhibited (as Spanish) at the Musée Cluny, at Paris. All these sirens were of the single-tailed variety; by their workmanship they are generally to be assigned to about the end of the sixteenth century. They are particularly interesting because of the rare distribution of the siren as an amulet. Silver sirens, differing somewhat from them in form, are still in common use as protections against fascination, in Naples,[2] and a siren of bone, mounted in silver, was obtained in the Roman Campagna,[3] but, so far as I know, sirens as amulets have not been reported elsewhere. It Italy, since a siren is believed to bewitch one by her glance, her likeness is supposed to protect one from a similar bewitchment produced by other causes—sorcery, or the evil eye.

EYE FORMS. (29, VIII.) A piece of rock-crystal, probably from an old reliquary, in shape like the Italian *vetro del occhio*,[4] mounted in silver; Seville. Probably formerly, as still in Italy, a charm against fascination.

(30, VIII.) A representation of an eye, in tin; Madrid. Its purpose could not be ascertained; it is probably an *ex voto*

[1] Bellucci, *Catalogo Descrittivo, Amuleti Italiani*, Perugia, 1898, XIII. 5, and xiv. 13.

[2] See Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, pp. 356 *et seq.*

[3] Bellucci, *Cat. Des.*, 1898, XII. 25.

[4] Bellucci, *op. cit.*, Tablet X.

for the sight, but it may be, possibly, an amulet with the same object or (though quite improbably) against the evil eye.

(31, VIII.) A brass ornament, formerly gilt, composed of a sword, a piece of palm, and a pair of eyes in a bowl, the emblems of S. Lucy, patroness of the sight; Seville. Probably formerly considered to be in some way preservative of the sight.

Eye-forms as amulets against the evil eye appear to be rare in Spain, not common as in Italy.

At Cadiz, it is said, the people paint an eye upon each side of the prows of their boats, following a custom of their ancestors the Carthaginians, as shown by ancient coins.[1]

Miscellaneous Amulets, principally against the Evil Eye and to secure Good-Luck. (32, VI.) A compound amulet, reputed to have been worn by a child, from its components evidently a charm mainly preservative against fascination; Toledo. It is made up of a red bead, a facetted glass bead, a bone bead, and a date-stone, attached to a chain; the gourd-shaped piece of opal glass shown with it was said formerly to have been attached also, although it was not so when the amulet was purchased. In Italy, (where it serves against the evil eye), and not elsewhere, to the extent of my knowledge, the date-stone has been reported as an amulet;[2] the other objects are all more or less well-known preservatives for the same purpose.

(33, VIII.) An oviform piece of aventurine glass, mounted in silver, and said to have been worn anciently by a child to to secure good fortune; Granada.

The idea that good-luck is attracted by some particular object is a very natural development of a faith in that object as a repeller of ill-luck, such as might be caused by the evil eye. Aventurine, sown with a multitude of tiny flashing points, is just such a material as would, in accordance with a very ancient and deeply rooted belief, have been chosen as a protection against bewitchment and the evil eye. So that, whilst it is possible that aventurine glass as a luck-bringer owed its reputation

[1] *Stories by an Archaeologist*, Lond., 1856, p. 226.

[2] Marugi, *Capricci della Gettura*, VII.

to its name, it seems more likely to have derived its name from its supposed virtues and not, as is generally stated, from the traditional manner of its discovery.

(34, VI.) A hunchback, of silver, said to bring good luck; Seville. This amulet does not appear to be commonly worn; the specimen shown is probably of Italian manufacture.

(35, VI.) A numeral 13, of silver, and evidently of foreign manufacture; Seville. This was said to be worn to secure good luck; questioning seemed to bring out the fact that the belief in it, prevalent in Italy, was of recent introduction and by no means general.

(36, VI.) A shark's tooth, mounted in silver; Madrid. A very ancient form of amulet against the evil eye. The purpose of this specimen could not be determined.

(37 and 38, VI.) Two teeth, said to be of the wild boar or of the domestic pig, mounted in silver; Madrid. The purpose of these specimens could not be determined; in Italy similar ones are used against the evil eye, and to favour the dentition of infants.[1]

(39, VII.) A wild chestnut, mounted with silver filigree, five small bells, and a chain; Toledo. Formerly worn by children against the evil eye.

The wild chestnut (Spanish *castaña sylvestre*, a name which, as will be noted, is sometimes applied to the seeds of certain tropical plants, varieties of *Mucuna* and of *Entada*) has an extended reputation in Spain as a safeguard against the evil eye.

The heart, by itself, without the cross and anchor is, contrary to the Italian and Portuguese usage, seldom worn as an amulet in Spain. It was noted only upon some of the jet hands, and there comparatively infrequently.

For other amulets against the evil eye see Amulets for Infants, Shells, Seeds, Gipsy Amulets.

Amulets for Infants. The principal amulets used to avoid the ills accompanying the teething of babies appear to be the small horns of bone or ivory which have been described (see Horns), and necklaces of bone or of amber beads. The bone and

[1] Bellucci, *op. cit.*, Tablet XII.

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VERTUS DES AGNUS

On nomme *Agnus Dei* de petits médaillons de cire blanche, faits par les moines cisterciens de Sainte-Croix de Jérusalem avec la cire du cierge pascal de la chapelle Sixtine et des autres églises de Rome. Ces médaillons, de forme ovale, offrent, d'un côté, l'effigie de l'Agneau pascal, avec la légende : ECCE AGNUS DEI QUI TOLLIT PECCATA MUNDI, les armes et le nom du pape qui les a bénits et consacrés avec le saint chrême, et, de l'autre côté, la représentation de la sainte Vierge ou d'un saint. La bénédiction des *Agnus* a lieu la première année du pontificat, puis successivement tous

les sept ans, ou encore quand le Pape le juge à propos pour les besoins des fidèles.

L'Eglise compte les *Agnus* parmi les Sacramentaux. Il importe donc de les tenir avec respect et vénération. On peut les toucher, les porter sur soi, surtout en voyage, ou les avoir exposés dans sa maison, qu'ils protègent, ainsi que les personnes qui l'habitent. La moindre parcelle a la même vertu qu'un *Agnus* entier.

L'Eglise a attribué aux *Agnus* une double vertu qui correspond à nos besoins spirituels et corporels. Voici, d'après les papes Urbain V, Paul II, Jules III, Sixte V et Benoît XIV, les propriétés reconnues aux *Agnus* pour ceux qui en font usage dévotement et y ont confiance :

Les *Agnus* confèrent ou augmentent la grâce en nous, favorisent la piété, dissipent la tiédeur, mettent à l'abri du vice et disposent à la vertu.

Ils effacent les péchés véniels et purifient de la tache laissée par le péché, après qu'il a été remis par le sacrement de pénitence.

Ils mettent en fuite les démons, délivrent de leurs tentations et préservent de la ruine éternelle.

Ils gardent de la mort subite et imprévue.

Ils empêchent la frayeur qu'inspirent les fantômes, et calment les terreurs qu'occasionnent les mauvais esprits.

Ils munissent de la protection divine contre l'adversité, font éviter le péril et le malheur, donnent la prospérité.

Ils protègent dans les combats et procurent la victoire.

Ils délivrent du poison et des embûches que tend l'homme ennemi.

Ils sont d'excellents préservatifs contre les maladies, et aussi un remède efficace.

Ils combattent l'épilepsie.

Ils empêchent les ravages de la peste, de l'épidémie et de la corruption de l'air.

Ils apaisent les vents, dissipent les ouragans, calment les tourbillons et éloignent les tempêtes.

Ils sauvent du naufrage.

Ils écartent l'orage et font échapper aux dangers de la foudre.

Ils chassent les nuées qui portent la grêle.

Ils éteignent l'incendie et en arrêtent les ravages.

Ils sont efficaces contre les pluies torrentielles, les débordements des fleuves et les inondations.

Enfin, les *Agnus* conservent la mère et l'enfant pendant tout le temps de la grossesse, et les tirent du danger au moment de la délivrance, dont ils calment et abrègent les douleurs.

X. Barbier de Montaut,
Camérier de Sa Sainteté.

Bar-le-Duc. — Impr. Saint-Paul

amber necklaces which are commonly employed in many parts of the Continent are in Spain retailed at the shops for the sale of surgical instruments. According to the popular belief these necklaces produce their effects through the mere wearing, and do not need to be bitten upon by the child. Most of the amber necklaces seen exposed for sale were composed of facetted beads which, so it was said, are preferred because of their finer and more brilliant appearance, though they are more irritating to the skin than beads having a smooth surface. It is possible that the teeth, Nos. 37 and 38, Pl. VI., were intended as aids in dentition.

The finger-rings noted below, set with infants' teeth, were said to be memento rings simply, and to have no amuletic significance.[1]

(40, IV.) A pointed piece of bone, rudely engraved, mounted in silver; Seville. A contemporary amulet commonly worn by infants as an aid to dentition and against the evil eye.

(41, IV.) A necklace of bone beads, for an infant; Madrid.

(42, VIII.) A necklace of smooth amber beads, for an infant; Madrid.

(42, VI.) A silver finger-ring set with an infant's molar; Toledo. A similar ring was obtained at the same time.

SHELLS. The opercule of the trochus shell, an amulet used in Asia and in Africa as well as in many parts of Europe, is common in Spain. Its popular Italian name, "The Eye of S. Lucy," and its reputed virtue, in Italy, as a remedy for eye-troubles,[2] appeared to be known, but not familiarly, to a few of the Spaniards questioned about it. In Spain it is called *haba* (pronounced "awa"), a bean, and is employed principally as a charm against megrims or headache, *jaqueca*, a trouble which, judging from the number of *habas* in use, must be rather general. In rare instances it was said to secure good fortune for the wearer. It is usually mounted in a finger-ring, often of silver, occasionally of copper. At Granada the statement was made

[1] Pliny, *op. cit.*, XXVIII., 9, speaks of the first tooth an infant has shed, and which has not been permitted to touch the ground, set in a bracelet and worn constantly by a woman as a preservative against certain pains.

[2] Bellucci, *op. cit.*, Tablet XI.

that the strength of this amulet increased with the depth of its colour; that this belief is prevalent, even in that city, must be doubted, for, were it so, only the darker pieces of the shell, which is cheap, could be sold, and such is not the case.

The cowry-shells noted below are paralleled in Italy, where the cowry, an ancient and widely used amulet, is employed, because of the ideas suggested by the form of its aperture, particularly for infants, as a protection against the evil eye.[1]

(43*a* and 43*b*, VII.) Two pieces of trochus shell, ready for mounting, showing the outer and inner sides.

(44, VII.) A piece of trochus shell mounted in a silver ring; Madrid. Similar rings were obtained at Granada, both in the main city and in the gipsy settlement.

(45, VII.) A cowry shell, having a bluish back, set in a silver finger-ring so that only its back is visible; Granada. Said to be a protection against all diseases, and a bringer of good fortune.

(46, VII.) A large yellow cowry, in an apparently recent silver mounting; Madrid. Said by the shop-people to be merely ornamental; possibly originally intended as an amulet.

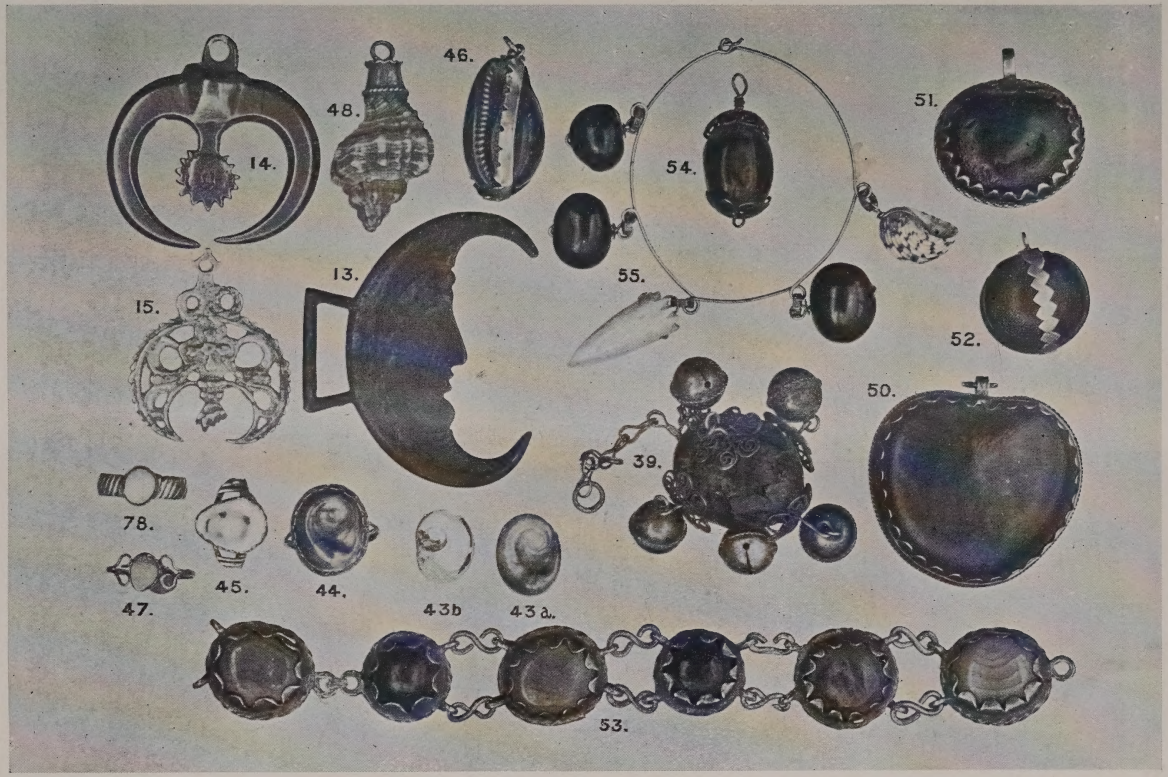
(47, VII.) A small, and not particularly decorative, clam-like shell set in a silver finger-ring; Madrid. Its amuletic purpose, if any, could not be ascertained.

(48, VII.) A shell, mounted in silver; Toledo. Amuletic purpose, if any, not ascertained.

Bones from Fish's Head. A very interesting amulet, whose survival I have come across in Spain alone, consists of one of the bones (or perhaps the pair) taken from the head of a fish, and called, in English, the "ear-bones." Amongst the Romans these bones, taken from the *umbrina* (*Sciaena Aquila*) were greatly esteemed as amulets;[2] and the French naturalist Belon states that in his time, about the middle of the sixteenth century, they were called "colic-stones" because, though employed as a cure for various ailments, they were used especially against

[1] Bellucci, *op. cit.*, XI. 8.

[2] W. Jones, *Credulities Past and Present*, Lond., 1880, p. 155.



SPANISH AMULETS: 4.

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colic.[1] At Rouen, in 1905, I obtained one of these bones, mounted in silver as a pendant, and apparently very old; I have seen no other mounted specimen.

(49*a* and 49*b*, IV.) A pair of bones, said to be from the head of a dolphin ("*golfin*," the old and provincial form of *delfin*), to be quite rare, and to be known by the name of *amuletos* (amulets); when used they were to be pierced and worn upon the chest, in contact with the skin, as a very potent preservative against all diseases, and as a means of securing good luck; Granada. At Madrid a similar pair of these bones, also unpierced, was found upon a street stand at the rag fair, but the vendor could supply no information concerning them.

SEEDS, ETC. An amulet formerly commonly used in Spain is a seed of a leguminous plant, large, and usually dark red or brown, with a black edge, numbers of which, variously mounted in silver as pendants, are still to be found. It is a tropical product, and is generally from one of several varieties of *Mucuna* or *Entada*.

(50, VII.) Seed of *Entada*, mounted in silver; Granada. Said to be a "wild chestnut," and preservative against the effects of the evil eye and all diseases, but especially efficacious against the effects of the currents in the atmosphere which, striking upon a person, cause paralysis and distorted features.

(51, VII.) Seed of *Mucuna*, mounted in silver; Seville. Said to be a potent protection against sickness.

(52, VII.) Seed of *Mucuna*, mounted in silver; Madrid. Called an *haba* ("bean," the popular name for the pieces of trochus shell), and said to be employed against *jaqueça* (megrims or headache). Another, slightly different, obtained at the same time, was said to be for the same purpose.

A seed of *Mucuna*, similarly mounted, was said at Toledo to be a wild chestnut, and to be worn to prevent the evil eye from taking effect.

(53, VII.) A bracelet or fob-chain (?) composed of six tropical seeds, some greyish, some brown, mounted in metal

[1] Pierre Belon on Natural History of Fishes, referred to by W. Jones, *pg. cit.*

and chained together; Granada. Amuletic purpose, if any, not ascertained.

(54, VII.) An undetermined seed, mounted in silver; Seville. Amuletic purpose, if any, not ascertained.

(55, VII.) A modern bangle, upon which several seeds, a shell, and a tooth (probably an alligator's) are hung; Seville. Probably imported, and purely decorative, with no amuletic meaning; interesting for comparison and as indicating how amulets may often have originated, and also as a possible survival of obsolete beliefs.

(56, VI.) A piece of blackish substance, apparently of vegetable origin, mounted in filigree as a pendant; Granada.

(57, VI.) A fragment of a hard, brownish, unknown substance, mounted in a silver frame as a pendant; Toledo.

Stone and Glass Beads. (58, VIII.) Two opalescent glass beads, worn by women to secure an abundance of milk during nursing; Seville. In Italy similar beads, or other forms of milky glass, are worn for the same purpose.[1]

(59, VIII.) A long ovoid bead of white and grey agate, mounted in silver; Toledo. For the same purpose as No. 58.

(60, VIII.) A globular bead of whitish and reddish agate, mounted in silver; Toledo. Worn by women to secure an abundance of milk, and regularity in menstruation; said to have no other effect in connection with the blood. Similar amulets are common in Italy.

(61, VIII.) A large bead of greyish, white, and reddish agate, in the form of a pair of truncated pyramids set with their bases together; Seville. Said to be traditionally an amulet of the Moorish period; probably really for the same purposes as No. 60.

(62, VIII.) A white and red agate bead, mounted in silver; Madrid. Probably for the same purpose as No. 60.

(63, VIII.) A piece of white stone and a piece of red glass, set together in a silver frame, as a pendant; Seville. Probably for the same purpose as No. 60.

(64, VIII.) A pair of facetted beads, of a reddish brown agate

[1] Bellucci, *op. cit.*, Tablet VI.

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mounted in silver; Saragossa. Said to be amulets; purpose unknown.

(65, VIII.) A globular brownish agate bead, mounted in silver; Seville. Purpose unknown.

(66, VIII.) A piece of clear reddish agate or cornelian, mounted in silver, apparently for tying on; Toledo. Purpose unknown; possibly against bleeding.

(67, VIII.) A facetted amber bead; Seville. Possibly from a necklace; possibly an amulet, purpose unknown.

(68, VIII.) A large pendant of a variegated green stone, perforated for suspension; Seville. Said to be an amulet of the Moorish period.

(69, VIII.) An oval tablet of variegated green stone, flat on one side, slightly convex on the other, and with two perforations; Seville. Found with a number of similar ones in the Roman ruins at Italica, and supposed to be an amulet.

Amulets embracing Religious Conceptions. (70, VI.) An "electric medal" for the cure of disease, apparently of foreign manufacture, to which a religious flavour has been given by shaping as crosses the various bits of metal of which it is composed; Seville.

(71, V.) A medal of S. George, with the usual inscriptions; Madrid. Similar medals are fairly common; although no definite information concerning them was obtained it may reasonably be assumed that they are probably generally carried by horsemen, as in France and Belgium, as a precaution against accidents.

(72, V.) A medal of the "Three Magi Kings," of brass, and apparently of Spanish workmanship; Madrid. On the obverse the "Adoration of the Magi"; on the reverse, apparently, the "Adoration of the Shepherds." This was the only Spanish medal of the kind found; its specific purpose could not be ascertained. The mediæval custom of naming inns in honour of the "Three Kings," the patron saints of travellers, still exists in Spain.

(73, V.) An old brass medal, much worn, mounted in silver; Toledo. On the obverse, two crowned personages with crosses; on the reverse, what appears to represent a saint bearing a cross. It was said to be used for the cure of infants ill with a certain

nervous trouble, being tied for the purpose upon the upper arm of the patient.

(74, V.) A cake of wax, bearing the symbolical figure of the "Lamb of God" and the name of a Pope, partly beneath glass, in a silver frame, for suspension; Madrid. Apparently a cake of "Agnus Dei" wax from a candle blessed by the Pope at Easter, formerly a highly valued preservative against various evils, and one still considered by many Roman Catholics to be exceedingly efficacious.

(75*a*, V., and 75*b*, VIII.) Obverse and reverse of a large bronze medal, apparently mystical or magical in origin; Madrid. On the obverse the Trinity, with the symbols of the Four Evangelists; on the reverse human figures, various symbols, and irregularly disposed letters. Probably of the sixteenth century. Of unknown origin and significance; probably not amuletic.

In all the Spanish cities, palm-branches plaited into ornamental designs, are to be seen in prominent positions upon many of the dwellings, and usually fastened to the balconies. These branches, which are renewed each year, have been blessed by a priest on Palm Sunday, and are regarded as being an excellent protection against lightning. A belief in the virtue of the blessed palm (or its equivalent) is, of course, not exclusively Spanish, but is to be found in most, if not in all, Roman Catholic countries.

Gipsy Amulets. There is a large Gipsy colony at Granada, settled upon the Albaicin Hill, just outside of the city proper, which was carefully gone over in the expectation that amulets not employed by the Spaniards would be found. This expectation was, with a single exception, not fulfilled, although the settlement was traversed in the company of one of its principal women, who, assisted by several children, made enquiries of all those who she thought might be wearing amulets. The people seemed to have little hesitation in showing, or in speaking of, their various protections, and many such were exhibited. Religious medals and tiny images of saints, which appear to have almost entirely displaced the former secular amulets, are now worn against the effect of the evil eye, as well as against all other ills.

Horns in particular were asked about, but although their

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employment was freely acknowledged, upon searching all the numerous infants within reach, in the hope of making a sale, only two were found. One of these was of bone, and of the form commonly worn during teething; the other was of twisted glass (Pl. IV., No. 12). Besides these, a second one of bone, of the common type, at that moment not in use, was found. Most of the children examined wore only religious medals.

A number of women wore silver finger-rings set with trochus shell, similar to those worn by the Spaniards (compare SHELLS), called by them, as by the Spaniards, *haba*, but also, so it appeared, less frequently known as "The Eye of S. Lucy." These rings are worn for preservation from headache, *jaqueça*.

Several women wore silver rings set with a small piece of hard white glassy material whose nature could not be determined, and which was not recognised by Spanish residents of Granada to whom it was shown. This substance was said to be the petrified milk of a fish, and to prevent and cure headache and nervous troubles.

(76, V.) A small leaden figure of S. Antony of Padua, worn in contact with the skin, suspended from the neck, by a Gipsy woman, as a protection against all manner of ills; Granada.

(77, V.) A silver medal of S. Angustias (the patron saint of Granada), worn by an infant against all manner of ills; Granada. A favourite medal.

(78, IV.) A silver finger-ring set with a piece of a hard white substance (see above); Granada.

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SPANISH VOTIVE OFFERINGS. PLATE IX.

Ex votos are still very extensively employed in Spain. The majority are made in moulds, of wax, of white metal, or of silver, and are bought, but some are made by the givers themselves. They are commonly very rudely executed, the ordinary ones of wax being cast, and those of metal stamped from very thin sheets. They take the forms of persons praying—men, women, or children; of parts of the human body—heads, eyes, hands, arms, or legs; and of domestic animals—donkeys, horses, pigs, or

oxen. They are called "*milagros*" ("miracles"), and are usually given after a cure has followed the application to a saint. Of such those shown on Pl. IX. are all, except the silver Archangel Raphael and the silver standing child, of cheap white metal, and, with one exception, standard types. The exception, which shows a man riding, was made, probably, by or especially for the giver, and may commemorate a safe journey.

In some cities the silversmiths sell, besides the metal *milagros*, tiny roughly made silver offerings, in various symbolical religious designs, which are presented at an altar when a miraculous intercession, generally for a curative purpose, is requested. Two of these, from Granada, are shown on Pl. VI.

W. L. Hildburgh.